

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS YAROSLAVSKY AND ANTONOVICH April 14, 2009

In Los Angeles County, Veterans comprise 25% of the homeless population, according to the 2007 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count and other local studies by non-profit groups serving homeless veterans. This translates to approximately 17,500 homeless veterans at any one time. The Greater Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) is also located within unincorporated Los Angeles County.

In Southern California, the cost of housing makes securing decent, safe and sanitary housing extremely difficult for some families. Escalating unemployment rates, high rents coupled with utility, insurance, and property tax costs add to the challenges of retaining housing. In fact, many Los Angeles County families have to look outside the City of Los Angeles and Long Beach to find affordable rental housing.

In 2008, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) partnered with the VAMC and was allocated 840 HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program vouchers (HUD-VASH). Additionally, the Housing Authority of the City of Long Beach received an allocation of 70 vouchers to partner with the Long Beach VA. However, no HUD-VASH vouchers were provided to Los Angeles County even though the County is the entity responsible for the provision of health and social services (such

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as health and mental health assessments, food stamps, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families benefits). Additionally, the jurisdiction of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) covers the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and 62 participating cities within Los Angeles County.

In an effort to address the housing needs of homeless veterans within Los Angeles County, HACoLA has successfully partnered with the County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) to outreach to this population. Through attrition from its Housing Choice Voucher program, HACoLA was able to set aside seventy-five (75) vouchers for eligible, homeless veterans referred by DMVA. However, this target population's ever increasing need for more permanent housing vouchers far exceeds HACoLA's current ability to provide additional vouchers through its Housing Choice Voucher program. With a direct HUD-VASH allocation, HACoLA can assure the availability of additional housing vouchers to homeless veterans throughout Los Angeles County.

Congress has appropriated new funding for the HUD-VASH program in Fiscal Year 2009. In Los Angeles County, the program can serve many more homeless veterans and their families facing an uncertain future, if the HUD-VASH program is simply extended beyond two Cities to the entire County. Although the vouchers are portable, HACoLA wishes to partner with the VA for increased utilization by connecting them to HACoLA's 10,000 landlord participants in the unincorporated areas and participating cities.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board direct the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors to:

- 1) Prepare and send a five signatures letter from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to the Honorable Shaun Donovan, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to respectfully request a direct allocation of vouchers through HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program for the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles;
- 2) Send copies of the letter to the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation.

FGK S:\HUD-VASH Vouchers